

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 14438

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG CG XA
SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS ON RECOVERY EFFORT FOR ZAIRE

REF: (A) STATE 141240 (NOTAL), (B) KINSHASHA 5632 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. DURING TOUR D'HORIZON OVER ZAIRE AND BROADER

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS, SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL WARNS USG
AGAINST OVERRELIANCE ON BELGIANS AND PARTICULARLY
FRENCH TO COUNTER SOVIET THRUSTS IN AFRICA AND URGES
GREATER CONSULTATION WITH AFRICANS. GREATEST DANGER AT
PRESENT IN AFRICA IS REEMERGENCE OF COLD WAR, WHCIH CAN
BE AVOIDED ONLY IF AFRICANS DEAL WITH OWN PROBLEMS.
CAPACITY TO LEAD AT PRESENT WEAKENED BY LACK OF MOVEMENT
IN PEACE PROCESS. U.S. MUST KEEP LINES OPEN TO MENGISTU,
FOR SOVIETS HAVE LEARNED LESSON FROM EXPULSIONS FROM
EGYPT AND SUDAN AND WILL NOT LEAVE ETHIOPIA ONCE THEY
BECOME ENTRENCHED. END SUMMARY.

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1. CHARGE MET WITH MFA UNDER SECRETARY AHMED OSMAN JUNE 6
TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON ZAIRE. OSMAN IS WINDING UP HIS
TEN-YEAR CAIRO ASSIGNMENT AND PREPARING TO DEPART FOR
HIS NEW POST AS AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA ON JUNE 20. HE
TOOK OCCASION TO GIVE CHARGE HIS "PERSONAL" VIEWS ON ZAIRE
AND BROADER AFRICAN ISSUES IT RAISES.

2. ZAIRE. OSMAN SAID THERE WAS "MISSING LINK" IN WEST'S APPROACH TO ZAIRE. HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY, GIVEN ENORMOUS WESTERN INVESTMENTS, INVASIONS AND INSTABILITY WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE. HE SEEMED PARTICULARLY SUSPICIOUS OF BELGIAN AND FRENCH MOTIVES, NOTING THEY APPEARED AS MUCH IN COMPETITION AS IN AGREEMENT. U.S. HESITANCY IN ZAIRE AND ELSEWHERE WAS ALSO INCOMPREHENSIBLE. HE RECOMMENDED U.S. (A) APPROACH ZAIRE PROBLEMS WITH GREAT CARE; (B) BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL ABOUT FRENCH AND BELGIAN MOTIVES; AND (C) CONSULT MUCH MORE EXTENSIVELY WITH AFRICANS, RATHER THAN WITH EUROPEANS, ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH AFRICAN PROBLEMS. WHAT OSMAN FEARS MOST OF ALL IS RE-EMERGENCE OF COLD WAR THROUGHOUT AFRICA WITH THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS IN ZAIRE, CHAD, MAURITANIA AND SOVIETS IN ANGOLA, ETHIOPIA, LIBYA, ETC. THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID THIS EVENTUALITY, IN HIS VIEW, IS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR AFRICANS TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.

3. EGYPT'S ROLE. OSMAN BELIEVES THAT IF EGYPT WERE STRONG AND PRESTIGIOUS, THE SOVIET/CUBAN SUCCESSES WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED. IN HIS VIEW, ONLY EGYPT IS LARGE ENOUGH AND EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO PLAY AN AFRICAN LEADERSHIP ROLE. HE HAD HOPES FOR NIGERIA, BUT FOUND IT WANTING. HE CITED SEVERAL EXAMPLES DURING PAST TEN YEARS IN WHICH HE PERSONALLY HAD HELPED OTHERS REACH SETTLEMENTS FOR AFRICAN PROBLEMS. UNFORTUNATELY, EGYPT'S CAPABILITY IN THIS

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REGARD IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. BECAUSE EGYPT'S SEARCH FOR SETTLEMENT IS NOW IN ITS FIFTH YEAR, EGYPT'S PRESTIGE HAS GRADUALLY ERODED THROUGHOUT AFRICA. IF PEACE PROCESS COLLAPSES, EGYPT WILL BE COMPLETELY UNDERCUT. OSMAN STRESSED SEVERAL TIMES THAT "EGYPT CANNOT DO ANYTHING IN AFRICA WITHOUT AN HONORABLE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

4. HORN. U.S. IS ASKING TOO MUCH OF SOMALIA SINCE IT CANNOT AT THIS TIME COMPLETELY RENOUNCE ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. U.S. MUST SHOW SOMALIA IT HAS OTHER ALTERNATIVES. IDEALLY, SOLUTION SHOULD COME FROM REGIONAL TALKS AMONG ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA, SUDAN AND EGYPT. HE FAVORED U.S. EFFORT TO KEEP LINES OPEN TO MENGISTU AND BELIEVES EGYPT SHOULD DO THE SAME. HE IS CONVINCED THAT IF THE RUSSIANS BECOME ENTRENCHED IN ETHIOPIA IT WILL BE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT THAN SITUATION WHICH EXISTED IN EGYPT AND SUDAN. THE RUSSIANS HAVE LEARNED THEIR LESSONS AND THEY WILL NOT GET OUT ONCE THEY ARE IN. HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE, ADEN AND INABILITY OF SAUDI ARABIA TO GET RID OF SOVIETS THERE.

5. COMMENT. OSMAN'S ETHNOCENTRIC VIEW OF EGYPT'S IM-

PORTANCE IN AFRICA COMES OUT CLEARLY. NEVERTHELESS, HIS
PRINCIPAL POINT THAT EGYPT CAN PLAY LEADERSHIP ROLE IN
AFRICA ONLY IF PEACE PROCESS SUCCEEDS HAS SOME VALIDITY.

HIS OTHER MAIN POINT WAS THAT U.S. MUST BROADEN AND DEEPEN
ITS CONSULTATIONS WITH AFRICAN STATES AND DEAL WITH PROB-
LEMS IN AFRICAN CONTEXT. IMPLICATION WAS WE SHOULD AVOID
LEAD TO RETURN OF COLD WAR TO AFRICA. THIS IS INTRIGUING
POINT COMING FROM ONE OF SENIOR GOE OFFICIALS MOST
SUSPICIOUS OF U.S. MOTIVES, IN MIDDLE EAST IF NOT IN
AFRICA.

6. RE EGYPTIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY AIRLIFT ASSISTANCE
TO ZAIRE REPORTED REF B, NEITHER OSMAN NOR ANY OTHER GOE
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OFFICIAL HERE REQUESTED U.S. ASSISTANCE IN TRANSPORTING
THIS EQUIPMENT. OSMAN DID REFER IN PASSING TO GOE'S
MODEST MILITARY SUPPORT FOR ZAIRE. EILTS

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